

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 9 are of record.

This Preliminary Amendment in this Request for Continued Examination retains claims 1-6 and 9. The arguments made in the Amendment After Final Rejection dated January 28, 2006 are repeated and incorporated herein by reference.

Claims 16-18 are added, each of which is dependent from main claim 1.

Support for new claim 16 may be found, for example, on page 15, line 15 to page 16, line 26 of the Specification as follows:

In the present invention, . . . that heats the soybean slurry by continuously blowing steam into the continuously circulating soybean slurry. . . .

Note that, more specifically in this case, it is possible for the steam pipes to simply be joined to the pipes through which the soybean slurry is circulating, however, it is also possible for the steam pipes to protrude into the inside of the pipes through which the soybean slurry is flowing and to provide the steam outlet at the distal end of the protruding steam pipe. In this case, it is desirable if the steam outlet opens facing the direction in which the soybean slurry is circulating (i.e., if the outlet opening faces the downstream direction of the flow of the soybean slurry). By providing the opening of the steam outlet such that it faces the downstream direction of the flow of the soybean slurry, the dynamic pressure of the soybean slurry acts on the steam outlet and a phenomenon is generated in which the steam is suctioned towards the steam outlet and the steam is blown efficiently into the soybean slurry.

In the heating apparatus of the present invention, it is desirable that the diameter (i.e., inner diameter) of the pipe through which the soybean slurry circulates is designed to be narrow at the portion where the steam is blown into the soybean slurry, as described above.

By making the diameter of the pipe through which the soybean slurry is circulating small in this way, the speed at which the soybean slurry circulates is increased resulting in the dynamic pressure of the soybean slurry increasing and thereby decreasing the static pressure. Therefore, the action of suctioning the steam in the steam outlet is strengthened and the efficiency of the steam blowing is improved providing an effect of stirring the soybean slurry.

Support for claim 17 is found, for example on page 15, line 15 to page 16, line 26 of the Specification, as described above.

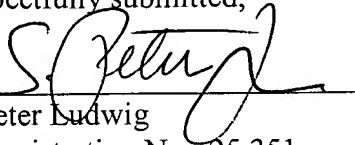
Support for claim 18 is found, for example, on page 17, lines 16-18 of the Specification as follows:

In this case, it is desirable that the diameter of the turning portion is in the range of $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{5}$ of the diameter of the pipe through which the soybean slurry is circulating.

Prompt and favorable action is requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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